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AUTHOR Bartell, Ted; LeBlanc, Linda
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ABSTRACT

The final volume of a comprehensive study of the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS), this report consists of a brief background description of the DoDDS system, followed by 10 legislative and funding recommendations based on the findings of the study: (1) increase funding in fiscal year 1984 and beyond to accommodate anticipated growth in enrollment; (2) authorize expansion of the target population for DoDDS to include both preschool age children and adults; (3) have military services screen all families for severely and profoundly handicapped children prior to overseas assignment; (4) support full implementaion and staffing of English as a Second Language, Talented and Gifted, and Compensatory Education programs; (5) increase travel funds for personnel performing supervisory and coordinative functions; (6) fund a one-time catchup program for maintenance, repair, and minor construction; (7) increase the major construction budget to permit planned facilities to be built to full specification; (8) provide authorization and funds to support selective expansion of paid school bus monitoring; (9) provide specific funding for a school-based telecommunications system; and (10) adjust funding of administrative and supervisory positions to correspond to a reorganization of the school system intended to move operational functions closer to the schools and centralize strategic planning, policy development, budget formulation, and evaluation. Explanations are provided for each recommendation. (TE)

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REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

DoDDS COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

TED BARTELL
LINDA LeBLANC

SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION
ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, INC.
RESTON, VIRGINIA

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THE VIEWS, OPINIONS, AND/OR FINDINGS CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEPENDENTS SCHOOLS [DoDDS] POSITION, POLICY, OR DECISION, UNLESS SO DESIGNATED BY OTHER OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION.

REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

DoDDS COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Study Report and the Future Factors Report contain our detailed analyses of the various subsystems that constitute DoDDS. In those reports several issues were raised, and recommendations were made to alleviate the problems identified. The purpose of this report is to identify those findings that have implications for changes in funding levels and legislation and to make recommendations in this regard.

DoDDS is a unique system of small and large schools, spread out over a vast area. This simple fact plays an enormously important role in evaluating the performance of the school system, especially when DoDDS is contrasted to systems in the United States. Compared to stateside school systems, supplies (textbooks and other materials) must travel much greater distances from source to consumers; managers must travel farther to supervise and assist their subordinates; to clarify a simple question of interpretation of policy requires communication over very long distances.

Especially at the high school level, there is a large number of schools relative to the number of students, and certain resources are probably underutilized: a fully equipped auto shop may be used by a handful of students; a math teacher may only have 10 students in his Algebra II class. But if those resources were not at the school, these students might not have access

to educational experiences they need. In order to provide quality education to all students, DoDDS has to duplicate resources more often than stateside districts do.

Further complicating the picture in DoDDS is the fact that the system depends upon the military for most of the services that stateside districts provide for themselves: student meal programs, construction, maintenance, personnel, finance, and transportation. The impact this can have is best illustrated by example: while a stateside district can be assured that its personnel office is concentrating entirely on the needs of the district, DoDDS must contend with the fact that the Civilian Personnel Offices [CPO] of the military services are giving first priority (as they should) to the military mission. Furthermore, the staff in the CPO activities rotate home regularly and are replaced with people who are not necessarily familiar with DoDDS procedures. While the schools in the military communities visited were viewed as being integral and a high priority, the reality is that when resources are tight, all of the services DoDDS receives are subject to being one of many items contending for priority in the military activity. These services are also subject to DoD policies resulting in the rotation out of people who know DoDDS procedures.

A third important distinction between DoDDS and stateside school systems is the higher degree of transiency in DoDDS. This makes it hard to ascribe achievement or other outcomes to the effects of DoDDS schools. In very small schools, such transiency can radically alter the grade-level composition of the student

body from year to year, making it difficult to estimate the need for teachers and other resources.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Increase Funding in FY84 and beyond to Accommodate Anticipated Growth in Enrollment.

The projection of school enrollments for DoDDS is complicated by the fact that demographic changes cannot be inferred directly through analysis of birth rates. The DoDDS student population is not a reflection of the U.S. population but rather of the U.S. overseas military subpopulation. This, in turn, is influenced by past birth rates in combination with very dynamic military manpower policies. Thus, in the fall of 1982 DoDDS experienced a phenomenon contrary to stateside trends and the system's own recent experience. School enrollment increased after several years of decline. This increase was, in many instances, anticipated by those at the school level who ignored the planning algorithms of the past and prepared their projections based on recent experience. At the system level the budget submitted to the Congress reflected a continuation of prior trends, and thus when the school year began many schools were understaffed and understocked to handle the increased numbers of students.

Evidence suggests that the 1982-83 school year's increased enrollment is not a one-year phenomenon but a situation that will be repeated annually in the short term. Over the last two years, U.S. birth rates have shown some increases so that the school-age population should show some modest growth after 1985.

However, growth in DoDDS enrollment will be affected upward more immediately due to the changing profile of the military.

In the absence of conscription, the military force is older and a higher proportion is married. It is expected that under a continuing all-volunteer force the percentage of military officers who are married will continue to remain at the currently high rate of 83 percent and that the percentage of enlisted who are married will rise from 57 percent to between 60 and 70 percent. This older, more likely married force will have more school age dependents and cause the DoDDS enrollment to continue the pattern of growth established in 1982-83.

The evidence that enrollment will continue to increase is further substantiated by the increasing technological sophistication of military systems. The deployment of these systems to overseas locations will bring about an associated shift in the personnel composition of military units. These systems will require more senior skilled technicians to operate and maintain them. Since such individuals are more likely to have children of school age, there will be an increased need for dependents education, independent of any increases in the absolute numbers of military personnel overseas.

In sum, military policy changes, changing U.S. military commitments, and increased application of technological innovations will all contribute to an increased proportion of overseas military personnel having school-age dependents. In the post-1985 time frame the numbers of school age dependents per married

military personnel can also be expected to increase, paralleling the rise in birthrates among the American population as a whole.

Authorize Expansion of the Target Population for the DoDDS Educational Program to Include Preschool Age Children and Adults. Fully Fund the Preschool Program and Partially Subsidize Adult Education.

As noted previously, it is expected that a larger percentage of military personnel will be married. This, combined with the sizable and continuous increase of women's participation in the military and in the labor force, suggests there will be increasing demands for programs for children of preschool age.

The October 1979 Current Population Survey showed 45 percent of all four-year-olds in stateside civilian families to be enrolled in nursery school or kindergarten. While the absolute number of children enrolled in the elementary grades has declined, the number in stateside nursery schools and kindergarten has increased. In the fall of 1979 school systems in 30 states and the District of Columbia offered preschool programs.

To respond to the trends of more children and younger children and more working mothers and to maintain comparability with stateside education programs, the financial resources available to DoDDS should be increased to provide preschool education.

Two trends occurring in the military population provide support for the recommendation that DoDDS expand its program to adults in the overseas military communities. The first is the expectation that there will be increasing numbers of military members with limited-English-proficiency due to a changing racial

and ethnic composition. The second is the expectation that given an economic upturn and a continuing volunteer force, a trend to select an increasing number of military members from the lower ability levels (i.e., Mental Category IV on the Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery) will probably develop. Large numbers of "Category IV" personnel and non-high school graduates in the military have in the past fueled military support for DoDDS offering adult basic education and adult secondary equivalency programs.

Legislation should be amended to authorize adult education programs. To the extent that such programs are designed to upgrade basic educational deficiencies for military members, this should be a funded program. To the extent that the programs serve dependents or serve continuing education purposes, the programs should be partially reimbursable by enrollees with basic operational costs funded in the DoDDS budget.

Mandate That the Military Services Screen All Families for Severely and Profoundly Handicapped Children Prior to Overseas Assignment.

Due to the generally small size of the schools and their wide dispersal, DoDDS experiences unique problems in providing services to children with special needs. This is particularly true of low-incidence children having severe and profound handicapping conditions. While the Air Force and Navy screen families for overseas tours and attempt to assure that services will be available in the location to which a handicapped child will be sent, this only partially alleviates problems in the case of the severely handicapped. The Army's new Exceptional Family Member

Program will soon encompass all Army families overseas and in the U.S., considering level of care required for dependents in all future assignments.

Without such screening, which is not currently legislatively required, children can be sent to locations where services do not exist but under law must be provided once the child arrives. Given the small size and isolation of many schools within the system, costly transportation of such students to and from schools on bases having such services is often the only solution. Compounding the problem is the fact that seriously handicapped youngsters are rare in the DoDDS system. Contemporary thought suggests that it is best to treat such youngsters in settings where they can relate to a peer group.

With mandatory screening of families prior to overseas assignment, military personnel with severely and profoundly handicapped children could be assigned to specific overseas stations where appropriately staffed schools and hospitals have been established to serve children with these special needs.

Funding Should Be Increased to Support Full Implementation and Staffing of English As a Second Language, Talented and Gifted, and Compensatory Education Programs.

DoDDS has conducted no systemwide census of students identified under PL 95-561 whose special needs are for English as a second language [ESL], talented and gifted [TAG], and compensatory education. Some regions do not have accurate counts of the specialist staff nor do they know their whereabouts. Using estimates based on reasonable projections of likely incidence we

computed that there may be as many as 7,600 limited-English students [LES] and only 88 qualified ESL teachers; there are nearly 5,000 talented and gifted students, of whom 2,500 have been identified, and 37 educators are trained in TAG in the system; there may be as many as 21,000 students in need of compensatory education, of which DoDDS has identified 9,700 but only serves 4,700 with 46 teachers and 89 other professionals specifically designated as compensatory education staff. Many students with special needs may, in fact, be served by other specialists and teachers in their regular classrooms.

It is expected that the needs for these programs will increase proportionately in the future. Demographic data indicate that the minority composition of the school population (especially Hispanics) will be growing through the 1990s. In the absence of a draft, the services will more fully recruit from segments of the population which are not now being fully drawn upon in their efforts to maintain personnel strengths. These subpopulations are those whose children are more likely to be LES or in need of remedial reading. As the services require more personnel with more technical training, demand for special programs to address the needs of TAG students may also increase.

About half the schools have a TAG specialist now, compared with just over 10 percent 2 years ago. ESL specialists are now present in half the schools, compared to 25 percent 2 years ago. Compensatory education services are provided by remedial reading teachers in 80 percent of the schools (up from 67 percent

2 years ago). While improvement is evident, DoDDS is far from fully serving these special needs students under current funding levels.

Increase Travel Funds for Personnel Performing Supervisory and Coordinative Functions.

Management of the instructional process of a school system with 269 schools located in 20 foreign countries is necessarily different, if not more complex, than management in stateside systems. Indeed, the role of the above-school-level subject area coordinators is especially unusual and acquires added importance in that many of the teachers whose work they are to "coordinate" are in settings isolated from the American educational mainstream and from DoDDS itself.

A generally high level of teacher dissatisfaction with the performance of regional coordinators was found to be associated with the degree of geographic dispersion in the regions in which they work. All regions receive equal funding for subject area coordinators to travel to the schools and consult with teachers, despite substantial differences in numbers of schools and geographic dispersion of the schools. Similar travel funding limitations impact upon the activities of supervisory staff in the logistics, finance, and personnel divisions.

Funding for TDY should be increased to allow school visitations and on-site consultations with principals and teachers to be equal across regions. The frequency of visits currently occurring in the least dispersed region should be used as the basis for budget projections.

Fund a One-Time Catch-up Program for Maintenance, Repair, and Minor Construction. Continue Funding of a Comprehensive Ongoing Maintenance and Construction Program.

The quality of the physical facilities in which instruction must take place can influence the delivery of educational services. Overall, the facilities operated by DoDDS are in satisfactory, but aging, condition. As of 1981, about half the classrooms had been constructed before 1960, and nearly 20 percent were in buildings designed for purposes other than schooling. Eighteen percent of the principals reported that there was a continuing or recurring hazardous condition that has yet to be properly tended. Twenty percent of the principals reported that they had to make frequent adjustment to class schedules, class size, and teaching assignments because of delays in obtaining repairs or maintenance. There is a clear need for new construction and for effective programs of maintenance.

DoDDS was delegated authority and responsibility for the construction program in 1978 and has responded to these needs by increasing budgets almost annually. The maintenance budget has risen from $8 million annually to $20 million. Apparently the need for maintenance of the DoDDS facilities is outstripping even this budget. About one-third of the schools reported that their full request for minor construction or nonrecurring maintenance and repair had not been approved.

The O&M budget is currently being used for three purposes: (1) to cover the recurring aspects of maintenance and repair of

the aging school plant, (2) to undertake minor construction projects that respond to the needs of a "living" school system, and (3) to correct deficiencies resulting from age, inappropriateness, or prior neglect. Planning and budgeting should be undertaken that allows segregation of O&M expenditures for the latter purpose. These should be fully funded under a one-time appropriation. Future budgets would then be concerned only with ongoing repair, maintenance, and minor construction, and a halt would be put to the additional deterioration that is occurring while schools wait for their requests to be approved.

Increase the Major Construction Budget to Permit Planned School Facilities to Be Built to Full Specification.

In order to allow its construction budget to go as far as possible, and in order to contain costs, DoDDS is enforcing minimum guidance as the maximum allowable footage for planning purposes. This not only results in lower square feet per student in general purpose classrooms than stateside, but oftentimes also in the elimination of special purpose educational rooms and their accompanying programs from school curricula. Additionally, since schools are planned on the basis of hard-projected manning levels only, there is the possibility of inadequancy when schools are built at sites where the military projects troop increases but these projections are not yet firm.

While the schools presently in the system are generally adequate in terms of space, many of those being built under the current major initiative to replace old and educationally faulty facilities will not be. Thus the future physical plant of DoDDS,

while newer than the now aged plant, will have features making it less attractive to educators, students, and parents.

The planning and budgeting of major construction projects should be based on revised standards. The overall funding level of major construction should be increased proportionately to this revision of standards.

Provide Authorization and Funds to Support Selective Expansion of Paid School Bus Monitoring.

The safety of DoDDS school bus riders is not a question of the condition of the bus or the nature of the route so much as it is the lack of monitoring on the buses. Nearly a fourth of the older students we interviewed reported that problems such as fighting or indecency occurred on the buses they rode. Sometimes arguments started on the buses are carried into the schools. Students who reported that discipline was good on their buses attributed it to control by the driver or a monitor. At the present time DoDDS is not authorized to hire or pay monitors for school buses. Neither is the military. The exception to this is when host national laws require monitoring. In some cases military commanders assign parents to monitoring duties; in other cases there is a volunteer program among parents, or a booster club pays for salaried monitors.

Approximately 40 percent of all students ride unmonitored buses. The problems extend beyond those of discipline. They include concern over the inability of drivers to speak English and thus communicate with the children in emergencies and concern, in some countries, over terrorist threats. Additionally,

many children are currently crossing busy highways to and from the bus without a safety guard. A systemwide, funded school bus monitoring program does not appear to be justified, although projects in areas where problems have been experienced may be justified. This should be augmented by actively encouraging volunteer monitoring programs throughout the system, although potential liability issues must be given thorough consideration.

Funding Should Be Provided That Is Specifically Targeted to the Design, Implementation, and Maintenance of a School-Based Telecommunications System.

Computers and associated technologies offer significant potential for addressing administrative and managerial problems. This technology offers real opportunities to remediate some problems which are inherent to DoDDS operations. One such area is the problems in communications among schools, intermediate administrative units, and the Office of Dependents Schools [ODS] due to DoDDS geographic dispersion. Some stateside school districts and state departments of education with far less geographic dispersion than the DoDDS regions are turning more and more to computer telecommunications networks as communication links among their subelements. Such networks provide:

- Computer "bulletin boards" on which to post announcements of general interest for access by all on the network. Such entries can totally replace general distribution memos and announcements within an organization.
- Electronic mail which provides user-to-user communications at speeds exceeding normal mail.

- Data collection capabilities such as computer-based surveys or polling techniques which can provide timely information to support management decision making.

Subscriptions to national and satellite-based international computer networks (some oriented specifically to education users) are commercially available and are being increasingly utilized by states and district organizations. The hardware requirements for such systems are minimal since they require only a terminal or microcomputer and can allow different types of hardware systems to communicate with one another. Considering the delays built into DoDDS administrative procedures by postal and communication delays, it would appear that DoDDS could greatly benefit from participation in one of these telecommunications systems.

The most effective management of a system as large as DoDDS requires management decision making supported by complete and current information on system conditions and changes. The ability to sense these changes at an early stage in order to deal effectively with their operational implications requires a capability for quick access to, and analysis of, a broad variety of information on DoDDS operations. A school-based telecommunications network might enhance DoDDS' ability to implement an effective management information system responsive to this need.

Adjust Funding of Administrative and Supervisory Positions to Correspond to a Reorganization of the School System That Will Move Operational Functions Closer to the Schools and Centralize the Strategic Planning, Policy Development, Budget Formulation, and Evaluation Functions at the Headquarters Level.

In both educational and logistics areas, evidence repeatedly indicates the need to locate a variety of operational skills and

expert resources at a geographic site in greater proximity to the schools. Thus, the recommendation has been made that DoDDS be reorganized. Below the level of ODS would be three regional offices charged with overseeing policies developed under the auspices of ODS. Reporting to the Regional Offices would be 20 District Offices responsible for administrative support, resource management, educational consultation, and supervision of school principals. On-site resource management positions would also be designated at the largest schools.

Preliminary analysis of DoDDS' current staffing indicates that the net result would be a reduction in above-school-level staff, justifying a concomitant decrease in the funding level. The recommended addition of school-level resource management positions would require increased funding for school-level positions.